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ABSTRACT

This study of the reaction to forced busing in Boston (Massachusetts) that emerged in 1974 illustrates the persistence of race and class discrimination and the counterproductiveness of some imposed solutions. It is focused on white antibusing groups and the complexities of opposition to busing. Racism is essential to understanding the Boston response, but it is not the sole explanation of the resistance to court-ordered desegregation. Nor was the antibusing response a simple manifestation of class conflict, although that undoubtedly played a role. The situation in Boston is examined from its beginnings in the late 1960s and early 1970s through its winding down in the 1980s. The experiences of Boston, and those of school desegregation plans in general, show that partial remedies and remedies that are aimed only at less-affluent Whites are doomed to failure. What has worked best are plans with clear legal requirements consistently enforced by the courts, plans that do not leave out sectors of the population or allow escape over political boundaries. Five tables in the text and three in an appendix of citizen-survey results present findings about public opinion. (SLD)

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